DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 389 IR 001 491

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TITLE	The Relationship and Involvement of the Special Library with the National Program. Related Paper No. 3.
INSTITUTION	National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, D.C. National Program for Library and Information Services.
REPORT NO	NCLIS-NPLIS-3
PUB DATE	Nov 74
NOTE	26p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Financial Support; Interinstitutional Cooperation; *Library Cooperation; *Library Networks; Library Standards; *National Programs; Program Evaluation; Research Libraries; *Special Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	National Commission Libraries Information Science; *National Program for Library and Information Ser

ABSTRACT

Special libraries can be expected to accept and approve the National Program for Library and Information Services although certain aspects of the program are antithetical to the nature of the special library. Traditionally independent, special libraries tend to have a local rather than national orientation and to resist standardization. Although library networks are very useful to special libraries, they cannot always return equivalent service to other libraries. The highly specialized collections and skills of a special librarian should be the major contribution of special libraries to national cooperation, but some libraries may make only financial contributions to networking. Special libraries are well-prepared to accept the national program's emphases on the information function and on the use of new technologies. A list of needs to be filled and activities to be undertaken completes the paper. (Author/PF)

ED100399

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION SERVICES

RELATED PAPER
NUMBER THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARY WITH THE NATIONAL PROGRAM

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Describes the relationship and involvement of the special library with the national program as described in the second draft of the NCLIS program document. Projects the role and prospective benefits the special library has in relating its program to such a national program, projects the types of standards the special library should be required to meet to join the national program, anticipates problems in developing this relationship, and suggests solutions.

NOVEMBER, 1974

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the NCLIS. Though related to the Commission's National Program, papers in this series are not an integral part of the National Program Document.

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Preface

Four quick points from author to reader so we'll know what we're both up to.

First, following is the specific charge received from the National Commission which this paper attempts to fulfill:

> "Describe the relationship and involvement of the special library with the national program as described in the second draft of the NCLIS program document. You should project the role and prospective benefits the special library would have in relating its program to such a national program, project the types of standards the special library should be required to meet to join the national program, anticipate problems in developing this relationship, and suggest solutions."

Second, it appears that the two dozen or so papers of amplification in this series vary in how much they represent a group in the library/information community. It is important for the reader to know that though this paper speaks rather freely and broadly of "the special library" and "special libraries" and "special librarians" en masse, the paper is the author's personal statement. It was not constructed so as to represent a concensus of any group within special librarianship. The Special Libraries Association (SLA), for example, will prepare its own response to the second draft of the program document. Nevertheless, the author's information and opinions have been quite thoroughly derived, influenced and shaped by the articulations, in many forms and in many places, of his colleagues. In particular, rather intensive recent relationships with the members of the SLA and with groups of librarians within the Illinois Regional Library Council have been important sources

of input, and these recent relationships are probably the reason the author was asked to prepare this paper.

Third, let us note that this is a "paper of amplification" to the second draft proposal (dated May 22, 1974) of "A National Program for Library and Information Services" prepared by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. It is assumed that the reader has read the second draft proposal (or its synopsis, at least) rather carefully before starting on this paper. If he has not he will probably be somewhat confused by what follows.

Fourth, this paper avoids trying to say every single thing which might be said about the nature of the special library and its relationships to the many areas of speculation opened up by the National Program. It does not include, for example, a state-of-the-art on special library activities in cooperation and networking, though a new one is now overdue, nor is it in any other way a review of the literature. It has tried to stick to essentials, and it seeks to follow the general tone and structure of the program document.

E.G.S.

The Relationship and Involvement of the Special Library with the National Program

If there were some way to communicate with the personnel in that segment of the U.S. library/information community which encompasses the 10,000 or so special libraries, and query them about their overall reactions to, and feelings of relationship with, the National Program as presented in the second draft document, it is very likely that the response -- on balance -- would be positive, supportive, encouraging, upbeat, participative.

Many of the goals of the program are in harmony with special library goals -- at least, as clearly as special library goals can be perceived, for they have not recently been officially declared. Concepts like "serving specialized information needs", "exploiting the new library technology", "acquiring a user orientation" and "handling the information crisis", which are not only mentioned throughout the program document but are at the center of the program's philosophy, are the kinds of ideas which speak directly, familiarly and effectively to most special librarians. They are concepts which are at the core of the libraries they operate.

Of course, accompanying this general reaction of acceptance would undoubtedly be some immediate disagreements with elements of the document, since special librarians are no less analytical than their colleagues in other types of libraries. For example, the place of the special library in the total library and information structure is presented strangely in the program. Special librarians have never made such strong

distinctions (or any distinctions at all, really) between special libraries in the public sector and those in the private sector. It is a dichotomy which is disturbing since it implies that a gap exists between special libraries in government and those in business and industry, associations and societies, and elsewhere (where do the academic and public special libraries fit in?). In practice, the relationships between all kinds of special libraries have been close and strong; the organizational differences go relatively unnoticed.

For another example, special libraries are also likely to be puzzled by the treatment of "information center", a form of information facility which now has many manifestations in the profession and, for that matter, springs up almost daily in such places as department stores, supermarkets, railroad stations and newspapers, to mention just a few locales. The special library feels a kinship to the information center. Many information centers evolved from special libraries; many special libraries are information centers in function if not in name (and vice versa); many special libraries are in process of increasing their levels of function in order to become information centers. In the program, the information center seems to be far out in right field in considerable isolation from the rest of the players.

For a third example, the program's conception of what constitutes "information" and "the information community" is still rather limited, though it has been considerably broadened in the second draft. Special libraries recognize, sometimes with dismay, that their users get their information from many sources other than libraries and the producers of

information on which libraries rely (often called "the information Industry".) Television and radio are also important sources of information, as are "people resources", research organizations which provide primary research data, R&D operations which provide technical information, trade and professional associations. Often such sources are more important information providers than the information community included in the scope of this program. A more stringent and realistic definition of the scope and function of the information community included in the program would probably make special librarians more comfortable.

But these, and other, details of disagreement or omission can be rectified in the revisions of the program document. Here, we are after a broad-guage look at the nature of the special library and the nature of the National Program to try to discern what is needed for the two to come together and work together in mutual support.

To do this, we will discuss some of the barriers and problems which stand between the special library and the National Program. Then we'll consider the many areas in which the two are already in harmony and support. We will project the role of special libraries in the program with emphasis on estimates of the chief contributions of special libraries to the program and the benefits they will derive. There will be a brief analysis of the relationship of special libraries to the standards mentioned in the program. The final section will suggest some needs and activities which will help special libraries to prepare themselves for an effective role in the program.

Underlying the discussion is a basic sense of assurance that special libraries will accept and approve the National Program in its broad outlines and will take positive steps to contribute effectively to its implementation. The second draft is a good enough document to work with. Practical special librarians would undoubtedly agree that we should stop talking about a National Program and starting putting it into effect.

Barriers to rapport

Certain aspects of the program are antithetical in some degree to the nature of the special library.

The very "nationalness" of the program creates problems of relationship Most special libraries are local in their orientation and activities. There is usually a circumscription in the clientele served and the subject areas covered; the "service area" of the special library can usually be measured in square feet rather than square miles. Though he may draw upon a vast world of information in doing his job, the special librarian typically turns his attention inward to the solution of the well-defined and pragmatic problems which are immediately at hand. So it is not difficult to understand why just about all special libraries -- including many in Federal government agencies -- are likely to require a great philosophical leap -- forward, backward and/or sideways -- to begin seeing themselves as part of "a national knowledge resource."

It has often been pointed out that special librarians have a remoteness and apartness from the mainstream of librarianship. The most obvious

manifiestation of this is the plurality of associations of special librarians: SLA, American Association of Law Libraries, MLA (medical), MLA (music), Theatre Library Association, American Theological Library Association; even the planning librarians require their own organization. By comparison, academic, public and school librarians seem to find at least partial togetherness under the broad umbrella of the ALA (special librarians are included in the ALA too, but are somewhat lost organizationally in the outer reaches of the ALA's Association of College and Research Libraries). But professional organizational structure is not as important a consideration as basic special library work patterns and objectives in understanding the difficulties special libraries face conceiving of themselves as part of a national knowledge resource.

Another closely related philosophical barrier is inherent in those important parts of the National Program which deal with concepts of coordination, common standards, compatability, cooperation and cohesion. It is the need succinctly expressed in the document as "common goals, objectives, methods and standards." It must be remembered that a sizable proporation of special libraries spring from, and are very much a part of, the capitalistic system. And this is a system which emphasizes competition, individuality, privateness and other characteristics which are in opposition to commonality of goals and activities. In addition, all special libraries, whether in the profit making sector or not, have long followed traditions based on non-standardization, unalikeness and uniqueness. Much has always been made of how well the special library eschews slavishness to the norms followed in other types of libraries, but rather chooses adaptation or the creation of new techniques in order to meet the special needs of special clienteles. The

universality of this tradition has never been measured or tested. But it is an ever present and important element in the self image of special librarians.

In looking at the idea of a national information network from the point of view of special libraries, it is possible to identify a number of additional attitudinal, as well as practical working barriers.

Neither the concept nor practice of cooperation, which underlies networking, is new and strange to special libraries. The need to cooperate among themselves underlay the organization of special librarians into the SLA in 1909. The cardinal principal of finding the information needed, no matter where it might be, has always required large measures of informal cooperation. Some of the hard results of more formal cooperation, such as published directories, union lists, duplicate exchange programs, interlibrary loan schemes, are evident in special librarianship over the last six or seven decades. Perhaps of most significance, the need for quick access to information, which is needed in all libraries but heightened in the special library situation, has had much influence on the development of informal cooperation among special libraries. So widespread anu successful have such unstructured arrangements become that there is a pervasive feeling in the special library field that the formal networks will not work as well since formality entails elements of red tape, deliberateness and time consumption which the special library method or operation cannot usually tolerate.

Being pragmatists in the process of "putting knowledge to work," special librarians know that the growth of networking must lead to more equal exchanges of resources between types of libraries. To put it bluntly, there will have to be more equality in the process of giving and getting than has been present in the past. For years, a considerable literature has given some attention to the special library's parasitical nature: e.g., reliance on academic and public library resources while continuing themselves as essentially "private" resources, except for their relationships with other special libraries. The practice has not been so much one of excluding users from the outside as much as it has been one of avoiding a program for reaching out. But now that the chips are likely to be down, some special libraries are beginning to wonder whether they have anything of value in the way of services and materials to offer other libraries and outside users. The question is changing from "will we give?", since a positive answer is inevitable, to "what can we give?"

In just about every discussion of special library participation in inter-type library cooperation there arise certain practical questions and problems which everyone seems to agree must be dealt with and solved before the special library can become a full and free partner in networking. These are not new questions by any means. These classic questions usually are stated something like this:

. How can we cooperate fully when each of our libraries has priviledged and confidential information which cannot be shared? Isn't it true that in business and industry even the indication of types of materials held, and their subject content, can give away information of value to competitors?

- Since many special libraries are small in physcial size as well as staff size, won't opening them to outsiders create a stampede of users and draw staff time away from primary user groups?
- If a special library should become a specialized resource center, either locally or regionally, how can it, if it is in the profit making sector, receive compensation from public funds for its services?
- Since networks are very likely to increase manyfold the availability of resources to special libraries, won't this lead to cutback by management in special library support?
- Even if special libraries are convinced that they should participate fully in networks, how can they possibly convince their management level people that resource sharing is a good thing and that information is a national resource?

The chief reason that solutions to these problems have not come immediately to hand is that the special library (as distinguished from individual special libraries and groups of special libraries) has not had a great deal of experience yet in participating in decisions relating to multitype library development nor in formal network planning and activity. It is well behind other types of libraries in such experience.

Thus, the barriers to special library/National Program rapport are serious ones. The solutions, if there are to be solutions, depend not only on special libraries acting differently, but also on thinking differently. Attitude change seldom comes easily or quickly.

The remainder of this paper looks toward counterbalancing considerations and also to solutions to some of these problems.

Opportunities for rapport

There are a number of considerations which tend toward successful involvement of the special library in the National Program. Nowhere is this more evident than in the program's first priority concern for the information needs of Americans. The information function is the single-endedness of special librarianship. It is the characteristic that best defines the "special" in special library and special librarian. It is the function that every special library must perform well or cease to exist. Consequently, special librarians can be expected to agree with the emphasis given to this need in the program and may even be more comfortable with the challenge implied than other types of libraries. They agree, of course, with Mary Lee Bundy's statement, in critiqueing the early NCLIS report in Library Journal (2/15/74, p. 456) that: "The most effective information service systems we have in this country are the small special library and information centers oriented around particular clienteles and/or problem areas, using back-stop collections. These local service programs, the vital link-up with people, are conspiciously lacking in the public sphere."

Special libraries also react positively to the program's orientation to the needs of both the user and non-user, and particularly to the work-related information needs of people. This need, the particular area of concern of most special libraries, has never before been so well articulated

nor found in a document as important as the NCLIS program. It's mere inclusion in the program does much to provide special library rapport.

Though special librarians have local responsibilities, they commonly reach out nationally and internationally for information and, therefore, are somewhat eased along the way to understanding the program's emphasis on information as a national and international resource.

Most special libraries are well into the new technologies which are basic to the program's success: computers, micrographics, telecommunications, and audio visual systems. These technologies are no longer new to them. Even those special libraries which are not presently employing daily hands-on experience, are close enough to the technology to have lost awe or fear. Many special librarians are technical people themselves and have had technical education. Special librarians and the information specialists with whom they work have been pioneer users, developers and adaptors of the technology. Some are well beyond housekeeping applications and into information storage and retrieval systems. They work in many of the organizations which were first to acquire the technology. They understand not only the contributions but are also becoming more sophisticated about the shortcomings of computers, other types of hardware and software programs.

The program begins to answer one of the classic special library concerns about the priviliged and confidential information in many special libraries which cannot be a shared resource. The program takes an important first step when it goes on record to promise adequate safeguards to the protection

of personal and organizational privacy and the maintenance of local autonomy -- a promise which is vital to the involvement of special libraries and, more significantly, the parent organizations of special libraries.

A fundamental purpose of any network is to provide a member unit with ease of access to a much greater information resource than it possesses itself. Special libraries have always been very conscious of their lack of self sufficiency and this consciousness has increased enormously with the increasing complexity and increasing costlines of the information needs of their parent organizations. They should know that informal resource sharing can break down under these pressures while the concept of plugging into local, state, regional, national and international networks holds the promise of almost limitless availability of information. Few special libraries will be able to resist such information riches when they become easily available.

On the giving side of network membership, special libraries have a long-term and still-burgeoning sense of guilt concerning the rather large amounts of knowledge they take from the information community and the small amount they now return. As more special libraries have opportunities to participate in networks and consortia, the word is getting out and spreading of the benefits to be derived as well as the contributions to be made to the cooperatives by special libraries. The good word appears to be serving as a stimulus to more widespread participation by special libraries as opportunities for such participation arise.

At this point in time, it appears that the opportunities may just about counterbalance the barriers for special library/National Program rapport.

The Special Library Role

"Role" implies a full measure of performance by the special library in the National Program, one which involves both contributing and benefiting. In many instances it will be a role shared with other segments of the information community. Taking contributions first, it appears at this time that those of special libraries and special librarians will be:

- To share with their colleagues their knowlege of, and enthusiasm for, the information function -- "a tenacity in the pursuit of information." It is believed that this contribution may be paramount.
- To provide their own subject expertise to the data banks of networks. Many special librarians have special subject education; all special librarians are subject experts by experience. This can include experience and knowledge of the new technology.
- To serve as channels to the subject expertise of the personnel in their organizations. Special librarians have unusual access to "people resources" and quite naturally and regularly tap this reservoir in tracking down needed information.
- To make available to networks sizeable holdings. A few studies of special library holdings have been undertaken; the most startling discovery has been the combined size of the holdings and their relative strength and importance.
- To provide access in depth to now-little-known specialized resources. Special libraries emphasize intensive analysis and use of small collections; they have developed bibliographic control over types

of materials not found in other types of libraries; for example, ephemeral material, fugitive research, technical reports, unindexed journals.

. To demonstrate that quick analysis of materials and provision for use is necessary to excellent information work. Materials get into special libraries and on their shelves and in the files quickly; short cuts in processing make this possible.

. To make unique collections available locally and nationally. It will inevitably be learned that some areas of information -- perhaps just small facets -- are most complete, carefully organized, and accessible in special libraries.

. To demonstrate that moving to a smaller unit of service can be effective in solving an information problem. All libraries, and particularly the large ones, must learn to access down, as well as up, the library ladder.

. By means of all the above, to help solve part of the problem of overuse of the large libraries. Special libraries can, and will, help to share the load.

. Through groups of special libraries in the same subject (e.g. chemistry), industry (e.g. advertising and marketing), or institution (e.g. museum), to provide experimentation in subject or discipline networking.

. To provide funds for the support of networks. In some instances this might be the most effective contribution of some special libraries.

. To present a reasonable point of view concerning long term solutions to the photocopy/copyright problem. Because special libraries span the public and private sector, their librarians represent most of

the points of view about this problem. On balance, they believe some form of compensation for copyright owners must be worked out.

. To serve as channels within the information community. The special library is the one type of library which can be found in all component parts of the information community (public and private sector, government, publishing, research, media, information services, education, public and academic libraries, etc). Perhaps the special library can serve a special purpose in helping this community to work together toward a common national goal.

In turning to some of the benefits which will accrue to the special library as the result of its participation in the National Program, it is well to remind ourselves of the human tendency to expect each new program in library and information science to solve all the problems that want solving and to bring us all the benefits we have long wanted for our field of endeavor. It is particularly easy to tend this way when the new program at hand has the potential influence of the National Program. The danger lies in looking too far ahead and in fantasyzing too freely, for then the estimate of benefits can become fairly unrealistic.

A realistic and logical forecast is that we will get more than a leg-up in starting a nationwide program which will weld together the disparate parts of the information community into a total system of services, and that the program will be supported by, and participated in, by a majority of special libraries.

Under these circumstances, the major area of benefit to special libraries

will be the same as that for other types of libraries: that is, considerable improvement in providing information services to users. This will include far greater access to resources of all kinds; effective exploitation of the new technologies; more effective use of budget, staff, space, collections -- in short, all the recognized basic objectives of an operating network.

Effective use of technology in the physical transfer of information and materials, ranging from old-fashioned truck delivery to new-fashioned universal telefacsmile, should do much to remove the geographic constraint which now prevents special libraries from participating fully in the process of cooperation. But the overriding benefit for the special library will be in moving closer to its capstone objective: instant and perfect information retrieval for every user.

The kinds of participation and commitment which will be required of special libraries should also result in a closer relationship of special libraries with the rest of the library profession as well as the larger information community. Special librarianship might lose its reputation of being the best kept secret in the library profession, particularly among students of library science.

One important result might well be an assumption of responsibility by the special library for its "unserved population." Some group must become more concerned about the large percentage of the population (80%?, 90%?) whose needs for specialized, work-related information are not being met by any library or information agency. These are the people who

might be "advantaged" in many ways -- economically and educationally, for example -- but disadvantaged in the respect of not having immediate access to the specialized information resources needed in their occupations and professions. Most public libraries cannot afford to give more than a nod in this direction. Academic libraries seldom retain a responsibility for the information needs of graduates. School libraries are almost never concerned about the information needs of the educated adult. And most organizations cannot, and probably should not, establish special libraries, although many more should do so.

In short, when we speak of "basic minimums of library and information service" and "special services to special constituences," we must begin to add every time the skilled laborer, the business person, and the professional worker to the list which traditionally has included the economically disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, and the handicapped.

The first step is to recognize that these groups and their special needs do, indeed, exist. The second is to find a segment of the profession to carry this banner. Special librarians can, and probably will, benefit from assuming this important responsibility within the National Program.

The matter of standards

Within the past couple of decades, special librarians have also given their due share of hard work to the development of statements of objectives and high professional standards. These statements usually dealt with the traditional areas of staff, collections, services, physical

facilities, budget. They were difficult to create because of the diversity of forms of the special library. And because of the diversity, the statements were usually less successful in quantifying performance requirements. As with most statements, it is probable that far more work went into their promulgation than their promotion.

The experience of the past indicated two things, at least. First, that despite their avowed differences in how they do their work, special libraries find that they do have objectives in common. And second, that special librarians understand the basic concept of standards and believe they have some value.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to foresee what will be required of special libraries (or any kind of libraries) in meeting standards necessary to join the National Program. One can draw only limited analogies between our past experience with standards of staff, services, collection, budget, physical facilities and our future experience with bibliographic, computer software, computer hardware, reprographic and micrographic standards. The former are too "soft" and the latter too "hard" to draw immediate logical comparisons. More to the point, the whole problem of standards for a national network is still a very hazy one. The questions to be answered are still being formulated. For example, an important one is: will the library/information community be able to formulate technical standards, influence such standards, or simply adopt those developed at the national level by others? Another is: how close will the library/information community be to the R&D activities which will develop the technical standards?

The special library's situation will be strongly influenced, as always, by the directions taken by parent organizations. But it is very likely that the special library, as always, will be involved in keeping a close watch on developments in relevent technical standards, alerting appropriate personnel in their organizations to the developments, and bringing the requirements of the special library/information center to the attention of decision makers. Through their national professional associations, and through these associations' relationships with affiliated organizations such as the National Microfilm Association and the American National Standards Institute, special libraries are likely to find useful channels for influencing the development of standards. But the question of the standards the special library should be required to meet to join the National Program can now only be answered with the questions: whose standards? what standards?

Getting from here to there

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that the special library expects to have a strong relationship and considerable involvement in the National Program. It is not quite so clear how this will be accomplished -- just how the special library will get from here to there. "There" is, of course, the state of being a full scale, committed, equal, intelligent, nationwide, contributing partner in the National Program, sometime in the future. "Here" is, at best, an ill-defined and variable state of readiness, in the present.

Some groups of special libraries -- those in the health sciences

are an outstanding example -- are leaders in the kinds of activities which will create a strong national information network. Other special libraries are quite thoroughly involved in local and statewide networks. Many have taken at least tentative steps toward formalized cooperation. Probably most have not yet identified opportunities or have not placed resource sharing very high on their lists of priorities.

Consquently, the means of getting from here to there will have to vary considerably from one group of special libraries to another. Following are briefly stated suggestions of some of the needs and activities which would help to bring about more successful participation of special libraries in the National Program:

. Special libraries need a thoroughly detailed picture of their present participation in cooperation and networking. This state-of-the-art is a very necessary first step in order to encourage additional steps.

. Closely allied is the need for gaining a general sense of the commitment of special libraries to the idea of resource sharing (as contrasted to the seemingly total commitment of the public library). Knowing whether the lesser level of activity is due to lack of opportunity, insufficient knowledge, apathy, etc., would be of considerable use to the associations of special libraries in deciding on the emphasis they might give this area in their programs. A major study might well be mounted concerning the need for, and methods of, vitalizing special library commitment to the concept of formalized resource sharing.

. The associations of special libraries need to communicate more

with one another both locally and nationally. Specifically, after each national association develops a point-of-view or a program relating to the National Program, there should be a conclave to attempt to work out a total special library plan.

. The associations of special libraries, as well as the divisions within the SLA, should be urged to investigate methods for exploiting the informal subject networks which now exist in special librarianship, as well as developing closer and more formal relationships with the many discipline-oriented networks outside of, but tangetial to, special librarianship.

. The potential contributions of special libraries to the National Program could be better understood if there were an up-to-date study of the private special library as a public resource.

. The considerable strength of local special library chapters can provide logical bases for citywide or statewide special library model networks. The most direct route to experience in resource sharing for special libraries undoubtedly lies in formalizing and making more effective the cooperative activities which have worked well informally for decades.

. The classic constraints concerning managements' objections to resource sharing by special libraries must be tested for validity. A demonstration conference, sponsored by one or more of the associations, bringing together administrators and special librarians to thrash out the matter, is one valid approach.

. Some way must be found to bring the attention of special librarians to the models of successful networking which already exist -- especially those in the special library area. An evaluation of

the common strengths of the systems, and how they were acquired, is more important than mere description. Additionally, as the disadvantages and mistakes become evident through experience *these, too, should be shared.*

. Special librarians can also profit by studying the public libraries in their states, since the public library has been pivotal to the development of statewide systems, and since it reflects experiential and leadership qualities which can serve as models.

. Still another model which special libraries can look to is the large company with many libraries scattered across the country. Their experiences in providing improved information services through cooperative action can be of unusual pertinence.

. Funds to support models can undoubtedly be found. In addition to the federal and state funds which have usually supported networking experiments, the parent organizations of cooperating special libraries are a logical source for funding.

. Groups of special librarians in the states should aggressively seek representation and participation in statewide library planning activities. Effort should be made for effective participation by the special library representatives and regular feedback to the special libraries represented.

. In many states and regions the establishment of special library sections in state and regional library associations could create opportunities for communication between special and other types of libraries which don't now exist.

. Special library chapters can provide a focus for local interrelationships between segments of the information community as an

aid to lowering the barriers that now exist, and as backup to similar efforts at the national level.

. Special librarians should bring pragmatic approaches to thinking through non-traditional methods of governance, jurisdiction and support for improved information services. Examples: a central special library supported by a group of businesses in a smaller community; cooperative support of a clearing house or switching center; a centralized processing unit or a union list for geographically scattered libraries in the same subject field.

. Special libraries need also to think more creatively about harnessing for network purposes the technology which is commonplace in many of their organizations: e.g., computer terminals, WATS, telefacsimile, teletype.

This list of needs to be filled and activities to be undertaken, though hardly exhaustive, brings us full circle to the greatest need of all. That is, of course, the immediate need for a federal library agency to coordinate all the activities which will contribute to a workable national program of library and information service. The special library is not so far along that ideas are set and patterns fixed. There is still the possibility for flexible adjustment to a national plan before, rather than after, the fact. Many of the developments expected to come from the special library field and described in this paper will come about whether there is a National Program or not. But on balance, the special library opts for the program -- and soon.